

Suburban Area Agency on Aging

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This presentation is part of the Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging recommendations for the White House Conference on Aging.

The focus is on Long Term Care Options and Alternatives through the Older Americans Act.

Title III of the Older Americans Act has always been the first effort to involve communities, families, neighbors and institutions in a comprehensive response to the needs of older persons who can stay at home or in their own community with help. The congregate meal programs and disease prevention/health promotion programs are the major national efforts to encourage older persons to positively address health and wellness issues. The Older Americans Act starts with the message that engagement, contribution and vitality are essential ingredients to the postponement or avoidance of extended long term care supportive needs.

Supportive Services with a wide array of options included in Area Plans on Aging are fundamental interventions and strategic assistance to older persons and family caregivers that offer support for independent living. This is often the difference between going into a care facility or remaining independent in the community.

Home Delivered Meals, in-home care; transportation and case management offer significant supports to enable people to stay at home with just the right external supports for their continued living at home or in the community.

The Older Americans Act is the framework for more advanced long-term care alternatives as well as Ombudsman supports for older persons. The models for successful long-term care interventions throughout the country build on the work of the Aging Network. In Illinois, a new initiative to design and eventually deliver a comprehensive, coordinated long-term care system first available in the homes of older persons is in the works. We would like to see the Older Americans Act expand considerably to assure that community organizations are intricately involved in new systems of care that emphasize choice, independence, support and respect for our seniors. In Illinois we have created access systems for Medicaid waived services in cooperation with Older Americans Act programs and investing in community organizations. We strongly believe that the philosophy, framework and future must be based on our work and that the most

significant recognition of these efforts must be clearly supported in the Older Americans Act. The 2005 White House Conference on Aging can be the launching point for amendments to the Older Americans Act that continue the initiatives of the Administration on Aging, CMS, State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, community organizations and older persons and their caregivers.